

5 What is claimed is:

- Sub A¹ 7
1. A system for monitoring usage of an electronic device comprising:
a client component installed in a client device, said client component being operative to monitor usage of said client device in accordance with a monitoring profile and to generate
10 corresponding usage data; and
a server component, installed on a server device in communication with said client device, for providing said monitoring profile to said client device and for receiving said usage data from said client device.
 - 15 2. The system of claim 1 further including a data management component disposed to store said monitoring profile and to store said usage data provided to said server device.
 3. The system of claim 1 wherein said monitoring profile includes information specifying which application programs, and which features of said application programs, installed on
20 said client device are to be monitored by said client component.
 4. The system of claim 3 further including a profile management component for creating said monitoring profile, said monitoring profile including a plurality of application profiles each associated with one of said application programs.
 - 25 5. The system of claim 1 further including a data analysis component for, based upon said usage data, determining usage statistics associated with application programs installed on said client device wherein said usage statistics include measurements of usage time, number of uses, and sequence of usage of specified ones of said application programs.
 - 30 6. The system of claim 1 further including a profile management component for creating and editing said monitoring profile, said monitoring profile specifying which application programs installed on said client device are to be monitored and a frequency with which said usage data is to be reported to said server component.

Sub 5
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7. The system of claim 5 wherein said profile management component allows for definition of a set of users of said client device to be monitored in accordance with said monitoring profile.

10 8. The system of claim 1 wherein said client component includes a client monitoring agent for collecting said usage data in accordance with said monitoring profile and for providing said usage data to said server component, said client component further including a client service for requesting said monitoring profile from said server component and for starting said client monitoring agent upon receipt of said monitoring profile from said server component.

15 9. A system for monitoring computer usage comprising:
a plurality of client components installed on a corresponding plurality of client computers, said client components each being operative to monitor usage of one of said client computers in accordance with a monitoring profile and to generate corresponding usage data; and
a server component, installed on a server computer in communication with said plurality of client computers, for providing said monitoring profiles to said client components and for receiving said usage data from each of said client components.

20 10. The system of claim 9 further including a data management component disposed to store said monitoring profiles and to store said usage data provided to said server component from each of said client components.

25 11. The system of claim 9 wherein each said monitoring profile includes information specifying which application programs, and which features of said application programs, installed on a corresponding one of said client computers are to be monitored by an associated one of said client components.

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Sub A 7
12. The system of claim 11 further including a profile management component for creating each of said monitoring profiles such that each of said monitoring profiles includes a plurality of application profiles, each of said application profiles being associated with one of said associated application programs.

10 13. The system of claim 9 further including a profile management component for creating each of said monitoring profiles and for specifying which of said monitoring profiles will be applicable to usage of said client computers by particular users.

14. A method for monitoring computer usage comprising the steps of:

15 monitoring usage of each of a plurality of client computers in accordance with an associated monitoring profile;

generating usage data based upon said monitoring and providing said usage data to a server computer; and

20 transmitting said monitoring profiles to said client components from said server computer.

15. The method of claim 14 further including the step of storing said monitoring profiles remote from said client computers, and the step of storing said usage data provided to said server component from each of said client components.

25 16. The method of claim 14 wherein each said monitoring profile includes information specifying which application programs, and which features of said application programs, installed on a corresponding one of said client computers are to be monitored by an associated one of said client components.

30 17. The method of claim 16 further including the step of creating each of said monitoring profiles such that each of said monitoring profiles includes a plurality of application profiles, each of said application profiles being associated with one of said associated application programs.

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18. The method of claim 14 further including the step of associating each user of one or more of said client computers with one of said monitoring profiles.

10 19. The system of claim 3 wherein said client component includes means for monitoring usage statistics for specified features of said application programs via predefined application programming interfaces of said application programs.

15 20. The method of claim 16 further including the step of monitoring usage statistics for specified features of said application programs via predefined application programming interfaces of said application programs.

20 21. A method for monitoring user interaction with an application executing on a client device, said application being downloaded to said client device from a remote location, said method comprising the steps of:

20 embedding a reference to a collection agent within said application;
resolving said reference and installing said collection agent on said client device;
monitoring usage of said client device in accordance with a monitoring profile and
generating corresponding usage data; and
transmitting, from a monitoring location, said monitoring profile to said collection
25 agent and receiving said usage data at said monitoring location.

30 22. A method for restricting computer usage comprising the steps of:
generating a monitoring profile which identifies prohibited usage of a client computer;
transmitting said monitoring profile to said client computer from a server computer;
and
disabling, in accordance with said monitoring profile, at least certain functionality of
an application program executing on said client computer.

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Sub A's 7

23. A method for providing assistance to a user of an application program executing on a client computer, said method comprising the steps of:

monitoring user interaction with said application program in accordance with an associated monitoring profile;

generating usage data based upon said monitoring; and

10 recommending to said user further interaction with said application program on the basis of said usage data.

24. The method of claim 23 further including the step of automatically performing operations to effect said further interaction.

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25. A method for monitoring user interaction with a web page downloaded to a client device from a remote location, said method comprising the steps of:

embedding monitoring instrumentation within said web page in accordance with a monitoring profile;

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monitoring events relating to said user interaction and generating corresponding usage data using said monitoring instrumentation; and

transmitting said usage data from said client device to a monitoring server.

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26. The method of claim 25 further including the steps of measuring performance characteristics based upon said usage data and transmitting said performance characteristics to said monitoring server.

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27. The method of claim 25 wherein said step of embedding includes the step of incorporating scripting language into said web page.

28. The method of claim 25 further including the step of measuring responsiveness of said user to advertising information displayed by said web page.

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